

MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACT-- S. 1880

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Background: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act will expand research and education on the biomedical, behavioral, economic, institutional, and environmental factors contributing to health disparities in minority and underserved populations. Recent studies show that minority populations have significantly higher rates of death from cancer and heart disease, as well as higher rates of HIV/AIDS, diabetes, and other severe health problems. In addition, barriers to care are undermining the health of many communities, including rural areas where poverty and the lack of a health care infrastructure often means a poor prognosis to prevent or treat health care conditions.

Administration: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act would affect the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

TITLE I - IMPROVES MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES THROUGH NIH: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act establishes: (1) a National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities at NIH; (2) a grant program through the new Center to further biomedical and behavioral research, education, and training; (3) an endowment program to facilitate minority and other health disparities research at centers of excellence institutions under section 736 with limited endowments; and (4) an extramural loan repayment program to train minorities as biomedical research professionals.

TITLE II - STRENGTHENS RESEARCH INTO HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND ACCESS: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act funds the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to conduct and support research to: (1) identify populations for which there is a significant disparity in the quality, outcomes, cost, or use of health care services or access; (2) identify the causes and barriers to reducing health disparities; (3) identify, test, and evaluate strategies for reducing or eliminating health disparities, health care quality, and access to health care for minority and underserved communities; (4) develop measures and tools for the assessment and improvement of the outcomes, quality, and appropriateness of health care services; and (5) increase the number of researchers working on health disparities in minority and underserved populations.

TITLE III- EXAMINES COLLECTION OF DATA ON RACE OR ETHNICITY: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act funds a comprehensive study of HHS and other Federal data collection systems, practices, and reporting systems related to race or ethnicity data. The purpose of the study is to identify the data needed to evaluate the effects of race and ethnicity on access to health care and disparities in health and social outcomes, and provide recommendations to improve the availability of reliable and complete information related to race and ethnicity.

TITLE IV - ADDRESSES ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act funds the Health Resources and Services Administration to establish research and demonstration projects for the training and education of health professions for the reduction of health disparities in health care outcomes.

TITLE V - INCREASES PUBLIC AWARENESS: The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act establishes a national campaign to inform the public and a plan for the dissemination of information and findings under all Titles of the Act.

